

# WE HAVE CLOSED OUR LOCAL STORES TO PREVENT VIOLENCE!

1. Stores operated by the undersigned companies in San Pedro, Wilmington and Torrance were closed February 6th.
2. The stores were closed in order to prevent any possible recurrence of violence such as the brutal beating of two Torrance citizens, one of whom is the manager of the J. C. Penney store in that community, and the other the manager of a local retail establishment who came to his assistance.
3. The companies wholeheartedly believe that no union-management dispute, regardless of the merits of the case of either party, can justify violent action. And the management of the stores intend to do everything in their power to prevent the possibility of physical harm to their employees or the peace officers and other citizens of the communities. This can only be accomplished by closing the stores, although it had been hoped that they could continue to serve consumers with vitally needed merchandise through a self-serve operation by a managerial staff which was not involved in the dispute with the union. No non-union sales people were working in the stores.
4. There is a dispute between the union and management which arose in negotiating a new contract. This dispute can and should be settled by peaceful means, and in the interests of the employees, consumers, and management, the stores should be promptly reopened for business.
5. The management of the stores herewith invite and urge the union leaders to join them in requesting the Conciliation Service of the U. S. Department of Labor to use its best efforts to bring about a resumption of negotiations and a settlement of the issues through genuine collective bargaining.

S. H. KRESS & CO.,	San Pedro
J. J. NEWBERRY CO.,	San Pedro
F. W. WOOLWORTH CO.,	San Pedro
J. C. PENNEY CO.,	Torrance
J. J. NEWBERRY CO.,	Torrance
J. C. PENNEY CO.,	Wilmington
F. W. WOOLWORTH CO.,	Wilmington

(Reproduction of a front-page story from the Los Angeles Times of Saturday, Feb. 2, 1946.)

## MANAGER SLUGGED AT PICKETED STORE

### Torrance Dairy Executive Also Attacked as He Goes to Rescue Man From Assailants

A Torrance store manager and a dairy manager who ran to rescue him from attackers were slugged from behind, knocked down and kicked into a serious condition yesterday following the reopening of a store that had been closed by an A.F.I. Retail Store Clerks' Union strike.

The reopening had attracted pickets who bore legends stating that they were from the striking A.F.I. union and from the C.I.O. United Steelworkers, also on strike at some Torrance establishments.

The store manager is Hillman R. Lee, a large property owner in Torrance, once president of its Chamber of Commerce, and a civic leader who drew Treasury Department commendation for his community war work and also honor for his Red Cross activities. The dairy manager is John Melville, son-in-law of the owner of Mayfield Dairy.

Lee is in Torrance Memorial Hospital where attending physicians announced his skull was fractured as a result of blows on the head. Melville is at home, attended by Dr. W. I. Laughon, also awaiting the results of an X-ray examination for possible concussion of the brain and other injuries.

Torrance police said they learned from witnesses that Lee closed the J. C. Penney Co. store, which he managed, and went out about 4:30 p.m. He attempted unsuccessfully to start his car and then got out to examine its engine.

The witnesses told police that Lee was examining the ignition wires that had been thrown aside from the engine when they saw two men stealthily approach him from behind and slug him. He went down and they continued to kick him.

But from behind Melville, in his nearby dairy, saw the incident and ran to Lee's aid and drove off the thugs. As he did so, witnesses told police, two men emerged from a two-color Chrysler sedan, grabbed Melville from behind, slugged him down and began kicking him.

Witnesses raised an outcry and the attackers fled. Lee was rushed to the hospital and Melville was taken to the nearby doctor's office. Later, he was taken home and neither he nor the doctor nor Mrs. Melville knew what had happened to him until told by John P. Stripling of the Torrance Herald.

Last September a strike of the A.F.I. clerks closed a number of stores, among them the Penney and J. J. Newberry Co. stores in Torrance; the Penney and F. W. Woolworth Co. stores in Wilmington and the S. H. Kress & Co., Newberry and Woolworth stores in San Pedro.

The stores occasionally attempted to reopen but in November they were shut tight and did not reopen until yesterday. They were reopened on a self-serve plan.

At the Torrance Penney store

Lee and an assistant opened the place and when a crowd had entered they closed the doors until all were served and left the store. A new crowd was similarly served and this continued throughout the day.

A short time after the store opened an A.F.I. picket appeared, later to be joined by others and finally by a body bearing the C.I.O. insignia. Despite the pickets, the store did a crowded business. It was reported, until Lee closed it at 4:30 to go home with such tragic results.

Describes Events Lee, interviewed later at the hospital, said he opened the store at 10 a.m. and pickets appeared about an hour later. It reopened for lunch at 1 p.m., closed at 2 p.m. and closed for business at 4 p.m.

"I locked up and a short time later went out the rear door and tried to start my car to go get my wife, who also had finished work," Lee said through swollen lips.

"When I couldn't start it, I opened the hood and found the distributor wires cut and the distributor cap gone. That is the last I remember until I woke up in the hospital."

When the stores reopened in Wilmington and San Pedro area they issued a statement which read:

"We are now opening our stores in an effort to continue to serve the people of the San Pedro-Harbor area to the best of our ability with the facilities available to us.

"We shall continue to remain open and offer employment to our clerks to the extent we are able. We have operated union stores since 1937.

"The right of a business to serve its community and the right of the public to use that service are fundamental.

"We continue to be willing to negotiate with the union. We emphasize that there has been no genuine collective bargaining by the union on the basis of the demands made.

"The stores open for business today with limited facilities. Only the managerial staff of each store, the manager, and his assistant, are on duty.

"The former employees of the stores were requested to return to work on Jan. 23 and have not done so to date. The stores have not been opened for business until today and no nonunion people are working in the stores."